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(SNP096) Raymond E. Morris interviewed by  
Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Sharon G.  
Marston

Raymond E. Morris

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mr. Raymond E. Morris  
INTERVIEWER: Dorothy Smith  
PLACE: Charlottesville  
DATE: October 23, 1979

TRANSCRIBED BY:

Sharon G. Marston

COMPLETED DATE:

November 19, 1979

Dorothy Smith: This is Dorothy Smith interviewing Mr. Raymond Morris.

Raymond Morris: That's right.

D.S.: Now Mr. Morris, where were you born?

R.M.: I was born January 12, 1925 in the Shenandoah National Park at a location which is now a picnic grounds which is the old Buckwheat Patch.

D.S.: Is that near Simons Gap?

R.M.: That's two miles west of Simons Gap.

D.S.: Now Mr. Morris just roughly how close were the houses together

R.M.: I'd say our closest neighbor was probably a mile. Approximately a mile.

D.S.: Do you recall his name?

R.M.: His name was William Frazier.

D.S.: Frazier?

R.M.: Frazier, William Frazier.

D.S.: Were there many Morris' and Frazier's in that area?

R.M.: I'd say no. William Frazier and myself were the only two Morris' who lived in I'd say two miles of that location.

D.S.: The reason I ask, I have heard. Instead of saying that..do you have any idea how you came to the mountains. Did anybody hand down any stories.

R.M.: Yea. My great-grandfather..old man Burton Morris was my great-grandfather..owned the back end of what now is Flat Top. He was born in 1834 and I think my father told me many of times the last battle he was in in the Cival War was in Mt. Jackson..<sup>he</sup>came back there and then my grandfather was born in the back end of Flat Top..which is now Flat Top. And after my grandfather was

married, he married a Crawford, he moved right over top of Flat Top and my father was born there. And in 1912 my father married Lona Morris which was born in Bacon Hollow and they moved over <sup>into Beldor</sup> ~~in, Belleville~~, right above Elkton.

D.S.: Right.

R.M.: And later on my mother and father moved back to Bacon Hollow and there was five kids born and my mother and father moved from Bacon Hollow to Buckwheat Patch, which it has always been the name since my father, <sup>day</sup> and I was born there January 12, 1925.

D.S.: What was the house like?

R.M.: Well the house has a long story to it. The story I tell you I get mixed up myself, about that house. \_\_\_\_\_

It was a large house only had five rooms but it was a large house.

And the <sup>GREENE</sup> ~~green~~ County Line and The Rockingham County Line hit the house. Now this is my story. Now and there was a record in the Clerks Office in Standardsville. Now if County Line hit on the north end of the house, I was born in Greene County; if it hit on

the south end, I was...it was a long house, sat north and south.. <sup>If I</sup>  
*was born in the north end of the house I*  
born in Rockingham County. Sounds strange, but it is true.

We had two springs. One..some calls it head of \_\_\_\_\_ Hawksbill

which runs into a river. Never <sup>was</sup> Hawksbill to me <sup>it</sup> grew up thru

my family as Butterwood Hollow and on the other side of the <sup>house up</sup> spring <sup>hala</sup>

<sup>named</sup> ~~same~~ Sand Branch..carried water from there, I carried from both..

which now is a picnic ground at that spring. Sand Branch. Now if

I got water at Sand Branch I got it out of Green County. <sup>If I</sup> Got it <sup>at</sup>

<sup>Hollow</sup> Butterwood I got <sup>it</sup> out of Rockingham.



D.S.: How many acres did your father own?

R.M.: My father didn't own <sup>the</sup> ~~any~~ land, he just moved there.

We paid no rent. Cattleman owned the land by the name of Armstrong.

D.S.: Oh, you were tennant farmers?

R.M.: No, we just farmed what we used.

D.S.: I mean you took care of his cattle.

R.M.: We took care of his cattle. We went <sup>to</sup> ~~over~~ the Shenandoah Valley in the spring and we drove them to the top of the mountain <sup>for</sup> pasture.

D.S.: Right. Do you know who owned them?

R.M.: Bob Liskey. I know them all. John Yancey is two. Mr. Armstrong owned cattle is three, and that is three right off. And <sup>John Sites</sup> ~~Sites~~, John ~~Sites~~. But lot of people cattled in there. A large track of land...290 some acres of land you you raised sometimes 150 cattle.

D.S.: Alright, then your father had to keep the land clear.

R.M.: No, didn't have to keep land clear at all. <sup>it was just</sup> ~~had~~ Blue Grass sod.

Cattle kept it grazed down. ~~No~~ only thing we did to the cattle..

if got out of <sup>this</sup> ~~his~~ track of land, lots of farms around, we would

bring our cattle back to the right.. farm you see

The only thing we did was <sup>salt</sup> ~~saw~~ them once a week and kept a count of them. <sup>otherwise we had no work to do</sup> we got no money for doing it only thing we got was to live there and grow what we growed.

D.S.: And somebody else had built the home that you <sup>were born in</sup>.

R.M.: The house was built they said by a man by the name of John Hyden.

I do not know who built it. I guess nobody knowed.

D.S.: What was the roof like?

R.M.: Well the road was a wagon road or a ground slide..no road in there you could get a decent car <sup>pull</sup> in up til the park..Skyline Drive..when they started that <sup>trail</sup> opened the road to Simons Gap

follow same old road come up through Lagoon Hill and across Pole Cat Hill and which is now Appalatian *Trail follows it. We* *came* down over the top of the place which is highest ground on the Armstrong place..down over top of that and came down to Buckwheat Flat..about 30 acreas and there is where the house is..which is very level and there is where the house was built.

D.S.: Now this is a log house?

R.M.: This is a five room log house. Log and shingles completely around and the roof, and this house..the way this house, I'm <sup>was built</sup> sitting in <sup>right here</sup> ~~now~~..you could have made seven or eight rooms out of.

D.S.: Yea.

R.M.: But it was a large house, only had five rooms; and when the park came in there in '36 .. done putting the drive through..Drive hit our house is another strange thing. Hit our house in '36. <sup>we</sup> Didn't have no place to go, didn't <sup>want</sup> ~~want~~ to go noplac. Our home..CC boys at that time was a working and they come and jacked this big

house and put it on *logs*, and they bulldozed it in '36

*the Skyline Drive* and pulled it down in the Peach Orchard which was about 90 feet *from* and we lived there <sup>til</sup> ~~in~~ November '37 and we moved from there down to a place near Standardsville to a place called *Resettlement*.

D.S.: What did your father find to do when he moved out of the park?

R.M.: Well there wasn't nothing to do when we moved out of the park.. they moved us out. They just tore our house down, piled it up and burned it. Moved us out. Moved us down to this <sup>new</sup> settlement

and we could grow gardens, but the land was no good down there. The land was no good and the government gave us \$25 a month til the next fall..til the fall of 1938 and they stopped that \$25 a month, and I don't understand why or know why and we moved from there then <sup>on</sup> ~~to~~ a farm and went to sharecropping.

D.S.: Oh, very, very smart. That was good idea.

R.M.: That's what we did. Tore all those houses down. The government had built them and then went back and demolished it..tore all the houses down.

D.S.: Okey, ~~then~~ that made a lot of sense, because your father did know how to farm.

R.M.: Grow crops. That's right.

D.S.: Now let's get back to your life in the mountain. Say ground was much better up there?

R.M.: Much better.

D.S.: Wasn't it rocky.

R.M.: It was rocky that is what makes ground rich. Rocks fertilize ground. Up there we used no fertilizer at all. We grow crops better than you can grow in the flat land any place they put us. Not only grewed, but we knew how to save.

D.S.: Did you have a horse.

R.M.: We did all our farming with one single horse. That's true. We <sup>and a</sup> never had no big plows like now. <sup>single shovel plow,</sup> ~~Did~~ better work to my way of thinking.

Getting back to my way of living I'll try to explain that to you from my childhood up. We saved everything. We'd take our cabbage.. we had no electricity, refrigerators anything like that, everybody knows that. We'd take <sup>potatoes</sup> ~~here~~, apples, beets, parsnips, carrots..all

this was buried in the ground in a pit for winter. We'd take our corn and keep in a corn crib..well, like ordinary people do today. Take our cabbage and bury them. When you bury cabbage you can do it two ways. You dig a *you a ditch* and you can bury head first down if you want to throw dirt and throw leaves all over. You pull up a cabbage just as good as as good as when we took from the garden. Just as fresh. We buried our cabbage a different way..We'd bury our cabbage, I'd say with feet down, that's with the roots down.

D.S.: You didn't!

R.M.: We did. *we dug a ditch* *them in* ~~bury a trench~~ the same way and put rows, just like my *leg on each side of it* four fingers...put a rail ~~in~~ *low* and fill it up with leaves, *and* *throw pine brush on* then go any time of the winter you want to cut your cabbage off. Pull your leaves *+ brush* ~~on~~ back like you got it *then an* on up to June. After you get all your cabbages..you go back and get your leaves and brush off and open your *cabbage head* ~~we~~ call it and then all your little bitty *cabbages like* that you buy at the store today you can cut *cabbages up and* ~~on up~~ *the* ~~all~~ cabbages are ready to *grow* ~~eat~~ again. That's one way we preserved what we grew. Can do it right today. People just to high society want to eat out of cans or walk to the market.

D.S.: You mean you would leave the cabbage in the ground.

R.M.: That's true.

D.S.: Just cover it up

R.M.: Cover it up with leaves and brush..

D.S.: Then when spring came..

R.M.: Uncover it

D.S.: You would get new cabbages..

R.M.: <sup>your own</sup> ~~new~~ <sup>new cabbages</sup> about as big as dart balls. <sup>What</sup> I call

<sup>cabbages</sup> some people call little bitty cabbage heads. I call them cabbage <sup>cabbages</sup>. Comes up all the way around <sup>the stalks</sup> one cabbage..might be a dozen on one stalk. Comes up all around the stalk..you can take them off..I think I got some here now my wife bought in the can now..I don't know where we got them from ..but you can them that way. When you can them thatta way you can keep them yourself. And then we did other things. We dried apples, blackberries..

D.S.: Did you have an orchard?

R.M.: We had a good orchard..good <sup>MILAN</sup> ~~mylum~~ orchard, old time mylum, big orchard.

D.S.: Alright, you dried apples, you dried blackberries. Did you dry huckleberries?

R.M.: We didn't dry huckleberries. We canned them. We canned a lot of huckleberries and we sold a lot of huckleberries.

D.S.: How much would you get for the huckleberries?

R.M.: Back then I remember when we sold them for a quarter a gallon and I remember when we sold them for a dollar a gallon.

D.S.: A dollar a gallon?

R.M.: And I remember selling them a quarter a gallon.

D.S.: Where would you sell them?

R.M.: Carry them to Elkton..Place there one time by the name of McQuires Store. Carry Huckleberries and chestnuts. I went with my father a many a time.

D.S.: How far a walk was that?

R.M.: It was eight miles; but we wouldn't walk..Poppa would always take the ground slide. We didn't walk..I remember .

D.S.: Oh the horse would pull the slide?

R.M.: That's right. Takes two days one time. Went down to ~~Bellville~~ <sup>Bulldoz</sup>..down to Elkton and back up to ~~Bellville~~ <sup>Bulldoz</sup> and we'd camp there..I've seen a lot of people do it when I was just a kid. Some would go all the way to Harrisonburg a load of stuff. I remember Poppa bringing <sup>loads of</sup> these cabbage tails, beans, onions, right here to Charlottesville to sell them. I come with him in a road wagon; and stop and camp out here at Georgetown. Pull in there and camp all night and go to town sell his load of stuff. Come back out to Georgetown and camp that night and then he'd go back to Buck Wheat patch the next day. When I was just a barefooted kid.

D.S.: Yea, right. Alright now..the store..didn't you have any store that was near ~~it~~ <sup>there</sup>,

R.M.: We had one store..we had one store that was built..I'd say right around '30. Just can't seem to remember when they put the little store by the name of George Herns. This was right on top of Simons Gap just down below the Ranger Station. We went to school there and George Hern ran a little store. He ran that store up til '36 and they had a big fight and squabble over there one time; a bunch of warrents was got, some of the people got knocked in the head with rocks and ~~all that~~ closed the store. And the only way you could go to the store then was to go over to Shifflet Hollow and there was no store in Shifflet Hollow. <sup>But a</sup> ~~Buey~~ <sup>Shuey</sup>

*up there on Saturday*  
Snowden he would bring a trailer ~~and set~~ it. And that's where we would go to ever Saturday to the store.

D.S.: Did you take like eggs, and chickens and hams there?

R.M.: Yep. I have carried a many a bucket of eggs. Know a ten quart bucket carries nine dozen eggs. Carried many buckets of eggs. Yea, I remember selling eggs for 12¢ a dozen. Bout the only thing we would buy..sugar and coffee..~~ba~~<sup>tobacco</sup>cca...Poppa grew a lot of tobacco too at that time. He knowd how to grow that. and salt.

D.S.: Your father grew his own tobacco?

R.M.: He growed tobacco that's right. Twisted his own tobacco and chewed. Chewed about half the time and smoked half the time.

D.S.: How did the tobacco grow? Well, there?

R.M.: Growed well, only Poppa said got too rank, grew too tall, too big. He said the land was too rich, he always said. But he would twist his tobacco and hang it up to a *faist*. Then when he wanted a twist of tobacco he'd just cut him off a twist of tobacco.

D.S.: ~~Yes~~<sup>pk</sup> never sold tobacco?

R.M.: No, sir. I've never knowed Poppa to sell bacca.

D.S.: When you took your eggs, chickens or hams to the store, did you get credit or cash?

R.M.: When we taken our stuff to the store we always bought something with what we taken except hams. Now hams, Poppa never sold ~~to~~<sup>those</sup> *us* Christmas. And about a week or two before Christmas we would take hams to the store and naturally he would buy scattered things that we really needed, but he'd always buy candy, ~~or a~~ oranges, and maybe a handful of raisens..always one little ole toy. Sometimes a rubber ball, or sometimes a car..We never knew what ~~a tree was~~<sup>Christmas</sup>..that's a funny thing.

D.S.: No

R.M.: He'd always set <sup>out</sup> a hat you know. And we'd have to go to bed you know and wherever or whatever <sup>he</sup> ~~we~~ had you know he'd always set it in our hats. <sup>He</sup> ~~You~~ knew who's hat was who's. One time if we set two out, he'd always fill one up with <sup>fire coals</sup> ~~charcoal~~. That is true, that is right. I remember every time he'd always say now if you <sup>put 2 hats</sup> ~~want too much~~, Santa Claus will fill one with <sup>fire</sup> ~~char~~ coal.

D.S.: Hey did you at Christmas, while we are on the subject of Christmas, did you do the Chris-Kringlers?

R.M.: I don't know what you mean there.

D.S.: Uh, did you masquerade at Christmas.

R.M.: Oh yea.

D.S.: What did you call that? Bell something...

R.M.: Oh we called it Christmas Carolling. We dress up and black our faces ~~as~~ and put on old ragged clothes..we would walk all the way from Buckwheat Patch all the way down <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ Shifflet Hollow oh that's four or five miles..all over <sup>a mile</sup> ~~on~~ Wild Meadow, go to every house oh ten miles away, you know.

D.S.: Did you try to change your voice..did you say anything?

R.M.: Oh yea we try to change our voice you know and then you know people was nice and then everybody would do the same thing. Sometimes be thirty or fourty in a gang. Everybody maybe wanted to go to the same house you know.

D.S.: Sure

R.M.: And the fun of it was, it was really fun I'd love the walk....the fun was whoseever house you went to would try to



guess who was who. What you would be dressed up in such a manner..worse than Halloween you know.. you'd be dressed up in such a manner that it was hard to tell, who was who. All we did that much. Oh we had dances..old time square dances.

D.S.: This was at Christmas time?

R.M.: Well at Christmas and other times too.

D.S.: Did the grown ups have drinks?

R.M.: Have drinks?

D.S.: Moonshine?

R.M.: Oh we made ~~lot~~ lots of moonshine.

D.S.: I mean at Christmas particularly.

R.M.: At Christmas Poppa always made ginger tea at Christmas.

That was all he drank at Christmas time.

D.S.: Ginger Tea.

R.M.: Ginger Tea. I tell you how he made that. He made whiskey, but he did not take strong whiskey to do that. He would take what you call low wine. He would take whiskey and ..you run your whiskey twice..you run it the first time, then you go back and run it the second time that's what you call doubling your whiskey, ..about 200 proof..Well when it looses a *Bead* you take it and knock your cap off if you want to stop your whiskey from when the low wine is in there. Well but if you want a low wine then, I'd guess about 60 proof, 50 or 60. I'll estimate 60 proof, you run you out about a half gallon after you run your strong whiskey out..and that's what you call low wine. Poppa would keep that low wine in half gallon jars or whatever we had it in, and then he'd put that low wine til Christmas time. I saw him do it

not only at Christmas..always at Christmas. You put that low wine on a ~~kitchen~~ stove just in an open kettle. Mama had black kitchen pots not an old alluminum thing..I never seen one of them *since I left the mountain*. Put it in one of these black kitchen pots and poppa would boil it and put ginger in it and then he would take it off and drink it just like coffee. Oh, its good.

D.S.: Oh, I bet.

R.M.: Oh, it's really good. And Mama *always* would ever Christmas we would sit up ever Christmas til 9, 10, 11, I knowed mama to sit up til 12:00 o clock and mama would bake ginger cookies. Only time we'd ever see a ginger cookie but she bake maybe a bushel of ginger cookies. And I'll tell you something else..Like I say, we had ..we lived fine had plenty to eat, more than they had out in the city. Soup Lines, we had plenty of everything; but, we never ate light bread or wheat bread only at Christmas. At Christmas time Poppa would buy 48 lbs. of flour and that was all the flour we seen til next Christmas.

D.S.: Okey, now..you grew your own wheat and corn?

R.M.: We grew our own corn and buckwheat. We didn't grow wheat. We grew rye, corn and buckwheat.

D.S.: Alright, where was the mill you took this to.

R.M.: Closest mill, it was the best mill, was over at Shifflet Hollow. I know a lot of people run it. Mattie Sullivan and Jerry Sullivan...old mill still stands there now .. rock still in it...We taken our buckwheat there..now we growed three things in grain.. buckwheat, rye, and corn. We carried our cornmeal there and had

it ground. We carried our buckwheat and had it ground. We used buckwheat only at breakfast time. And our mama fixed buckwheat..I love it anytime yet though..take black strap mollasses we made our own molassas out of cane.We growed that too; but I don't consider it a grain in that respect..and fry flitter bread which now you call pancakes or something.

D.S.: Flitter?

R.M.: Flitter Bread what we call it and put on top of poppa's stove on a long grill about that long and we called it flitter bread and then we put this syrup over..just same as pancakes only better. And that was our buckwheat. And our corn as I say we fed our horses, and cows, mostly fed it to the hogs cause we always killed three or four hogs every year. And then our rye.. we..poppa made whiskey out of the rye. Thrash it out on a frail..take a *hickory* pole and make you a frail..put it down on a sheet and thrash it out..shake the sheet up and down and all the husks will leave it and it's pure rye and then poppa would make his whiskey out of that rye. Then after he made whiskey out of that rye then he'd take the rye to the house and feed to the hogs..so we didn't throw away anything.

D.S.: No. Did your father sell his moonshine?

R.M.: Yes he did, that is true.

D.S.: Where would he sell it?

R.M.: Well our biggest buyers were over in the Shenandoah Valley..

Cattle people..then we had just mountain people would come to buy whiskey cause poppa would..he was a great moonshiner..made good whiskey and uh people would come there .. I remember peo-

ple coming there..didn't sell it for much..I remember selling.. I think the cheapest I remember poppa selling it was \$2 a gallon mostly \$2.50 and he would put *in on penny* watches and guns and all that stuff and he'd take it over in the valley or take it someplace and resell it maybe for more..most of the time he'd come back and get what he'd pawned..sometimes he did..sometimes he didn't..then sometimes poppa would keep 'em sometimes he'd sell 'em..sometimes he'd loose money..some-time's he'd make money..so that's the way it went. The biggest majority of the whiskey was sold in the Shenandoah Valley.

D.S.: Did you ever have any signal the revenuer was coming up?

R.M.: We never had no signal as I can recall. We never knew a reve-nuer back there. They was asked to come up..we knew that. Even come and told poppa he was asked to come back there. Poppa had it in three locations..impossible to catch anybody. One place back there we called William's cornpatch. Reason we called it that was there was a good spring corner of it *it was in* ~~at~~ a wilderness. *place.* No way to catch no one back there. Usta be a corn patch and someone heard you mention a corn patch. *he wouldn't know where* Then we had one place *it was at.* right over Moten Mountain down from the Buckwheat Patch. We called it Moten Spring and it was no way you could catch nobody. And we had one place right...I can go back to the spot..old place still there. Right at head of Sam Branch Hollow..right above those picnic tables..Good location. Mr. Silas Shifflet was a deputy sheriff and Mr. William Sullivan lived right down behind Simons Gap and he came down there one time and told poppa...Said Luther I came back here..I'm gonna tell you some-

thing..had an ax with him. I come back here to bust your barrels up. Poppa said you come back here to bust my barrels up. He said yea. And poppa said you welcome to go on and bust them..poppa was sitting there at the table eating..so he sat and talked awhile and uh finally William Sullivan he told Silas..I can't find them .. that man's.. barrels. He said I believe they are back there; but, we never had a barrel busted. Never had a barrel busted. Poppa made whiskey up til the time we left...just up to the time we left..even when they putting the Skyline Drive in...people from Arkansaw..but he worked on the Skyline Drive. Tuffy and Miles and Blacky Tucker..oh, he bought a lot of whiskey from poppa..Never had nobody to bother us..you couldn't catch nobody back there in those mountains.

D.S.: Yea.

R.M.: I tell you, a lot of people don't understand. My wife is from the city; but now she is pretty adjusted to the country..It makes me mad you know the way they done..you know more than half of that park didn't belong to the government. That was surveyed land..who'd it belong to..land didn't belong to nobody. We hunted on it from babies on up..on up right through the years. But if the park..it's beautiful just like you got it..now I enjoy just riding through it...but if the park gonna come in there and take the land and put us out..tore our houses down and throwed us out like a bunch of cattle why didn't he take this land that <sup>they</sup>you got free..more than 10,000 acres when less than 400 families <sup>they</sup>he could have give enough for what he taken <sup>to have</sup> for nothing and bought a piece of land for us to last us the rest

of our life. Wouldn't have cost him near a penny..didn't cost him nothing to take it..We paid up there..oh I'm gonna make a guess I have no record of it..about half of the mountain people never owned that land that the government paid em for but they..it was <sup>been</sup> surveyed land..taken it up and paid taxes on it, and then when the park came the park paid them for it so least they paid them for something but they didn't give us nothing.

D.S.: No. Hey change subject. Did you have a school anywhere near you?

R.M.: Oh yea we had a school. I started school when I was eight years old. Maybe seven. Story now about school too. I learned what time I went. It was only about I'd say four months of the year we could even get close to a school. So we went about 2½ months in the fall. But from December on up to April I've seen snow we just couldn't go.

D.S.: How far was it to the school?

R.M.: About two miles. The park rangers living in the building..Old <sup>Recreation</sup> ~~Revelation~~ Hall.

D.S.: Ah!!

R.M.: School house set right in front of it..tore it down..church set right up above it, a big white church, a big mission set right <sup>on</sup> down behind it.

D.S.: What was the name of the mission?

R.M.: Simons Gap Mission. Two ladies came here in their teens..three came, my mother and father said..first one came there was by the name of Miss Pretelow..she stayed there <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ she was old I think, I don't remember what happened to her..and a lady came

from Israel...Jerusalem. Miss Cumberland Knott..I don't know how they spelled it. She came from Jerusalem someplace, to the mission here. And uh Miss Marsh came from some place in Judea. I don't remember exactly where.

D.S.: What did this mission do. Anything to help the people?

R.M.: Well in a way, in a way helped the mountain people right much.

The mission people were just like, I'd say, a storekeeper out here..I'd say maybe they had the *pots*. In saying that is some of the mountain people would get good stuff and some of them wouldn't get nothing, in that way like I say they'd get old stuff. Yea we got some clothes..course mama made the biggest majority of our clothes but we got some clothes, course all second hand clothes sent there you know. Then we got some second hand shoes..I wore women's shoes..all of us did..up until I was eight years old. Mama would get a nickel a pair or ten cents a pair or things like that you know or get what you call a quarter bag...whole bag of clothes of all different kinds and clothes that we couldn't use or mama couldn't use, she'd tear them up and make shirts, or pants, or underclothes, or quilts.. Mama made our own quilts we didn't have to buy nothing like that. When I was eight years old my brother Sam bought me a pair of new shoes. I never will forget that day..I was proud as I could be.. ~~He~~ *He* bought those in Elkton. *in a store* by the name of McQuires. He was a great trapper..he taught me a great much of mind. Well taught me all

D.S.: We'll get into trapping in a minute, but we haven't finished.

Would you go barefoot in the summer.

R.M.: All the time barefoot in the summer.

D.S.: And just shoes in the winter?

R.M.: Yea. We wouldn't wear a shoe in the summer if we had it. No sir we just wouldn't wear it..why I'd go barefoot yet when I could walk. I never wear shoes around here..out here in the yards and everyplace I still go barefoot. We didn't wear no shoes in no summertime. No..on up til on up til wintertime we didn't have no shoes at all.

D.S.: Alright now you skipped away from school.

How many grades did you go to?

R.M.: I don't remember going to but four, grades. I got much more education than that I picked up out of school now you know. Reading and writing and you know things like that. I never went to but the fourth grade and I tell you the truth I didn't know much in the fourth grade. I went to the fourth grade tho. Mama now she had a good education but poppa couldn't read and write his name. Mama had a good education and she'd help us too in the wintertime when when we couldn't go to school.

D.S.: Now your mother had

R.M.: That's right mama had a good education. Mama helped us a lot. She helped all of us a lot. Most of us come up with good education and like I say when we come down off the mountain and got where we could go to school it was different. Now I was right in the middle of the family and the four years I went to school like I say I was right in the middle and I walked that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles and we only went to school in the fall and the spring. In the winter..now we finished carrying our cattle back in the valley in the fall of the year..but we were busy then getting in wood



for the winter..most of the time we'd try to get in enough to last but you got a little through the winter you know..well, I've seen it there you know..we'd shovel a road to the barn where we could milk the cows always kept a couple cows we'd shovel a road to the barn, we'd shovel a road to the hog pen and to the corn crib and then we'd shovel a road to the spring or either break it ..most times poppa would drag his feet..tie sacks around his feet and drag his feet and break through wouldn't have to shovel it..Shovel a path to our rabbits..kept a lot of rabbits.

D.S.: You did .. what for?

R.M.: Well we ate a lot of them..biggest majority we ate 'em. We never ate old rabbits just turn them out let them <sup>grow</sup> you know. But we had as many as 300 rabbits. And rabbits weigh about a pound or pound and a half...that's right..

D.S.: These were wild rabbits?

R.M.: No, we had tame rabbits..all colors. We ate the rabbits. I mean in the spring of the year when our rabbits would drop youngens .. we turned them out .. let them run around the house only in the winter we kept them in a <sup>pen</sup>..made out of pine boards..And in the winter time we kept them up and in the summer time we kept them turned out around the house. And maybe half of them would go wild. Then in the fall of the year.. September on up <sup>til winter</sup> we had rabbits anytime we wanted. Didn't have to shoot them all we had to do was take a rock and knock them in the head and <sup>kill</sup> us three or four rabbits. We just had plenty!

D.S.: I'll be darn..you were smart. Did you raise sheep?

R.M.: No sir. Poppa would not have a sheep around. Poppa did not like sheep..said they was too much trouble...and he would not.

D.S.: So you had chicken..

R.M.: Chicken, rabbit, cows, horse, dogs.

D.S.: And hogs.

R.M.: We didn't buy dog food. No. Everything we trapped we cooked for our dogs. I've tasted of every wild meat that is in that forest back there..from skunk to a bear.

D.S.: Bear! Were there bear there?

R.M.: Scattered bears..scattered bear all since I can remember. And one more thing that was in that park..the rangers maybe see~~x~~ them but I think maybe they get a little bit confused is timber wolf..in the park in my ancestors day<sup>all</sup> and in my day.

D.S.: Alright would you elaborate. You say in your ancestors day.. how do you know.

R.M.: My father talked about em all his life..all my ancestors talked about the little timber wolf, and I shot one when I was about eleven years old. So I believe it gives me reason to believe <sup>I have</sup> ~~he had~~ to tell me the truth.

D.S.: It wasn't a bobcat..it wasn't a cooger.

R.M.: No..no we kept all those and kept them live and tried to tame them. Rattlesnake, bobcat, foxes. We kept all of that stuff. And we kept two rattlesnake six months and wouldn't eat and it killed em. We kept two bobcats...two bobcats now there is a bobcat and a *cat-a-munt*

D.S.: Yea.

R.M.: The *Cat a mount* is redder than the bobcat. We kept them a year at a time but they'd attack you. Nothing could tame em down. And a ~~fox~~ you can't tame them but you can never do nothing with them. They will eat up your chicken. He'll eat up everything you got.

D.S.: Then there were timber wolf and bear.

R.M.: Yea. bears and timber wolf that is true.

D.S.: And you hunted them.

R.M.: We hunted them that is true. But I never saw but one timber wolf..shot one. And I'll tell you *hey*  
this map I got here where it says top of Moore Hill right down to the left of that is what they call a plumb tree, is a ground hog den. And I was about eleven years old and I was over there and my brother Sam ~~seen~~ *saw* me over there and he told me to kill me a ground hog. There was a ground hog living there. And I shot a timber wolf right there. A timber wolf is between a collie dog and a german shepard dog only 'mind ya of the color of a white german shepard. There was timber wolf back there that is true. And I hear people talking about seeing mountain lion and I'm always wondering whether they are seeing a medium size timber wolf and getting mixed up with a *Cat-a-mount*, or either seeing a timber wolf and getting it mixed up with a mountain lion. I have never seen a mountain lion and I've walked around I think in every ravine and every hollow night and day in that park from *Bilder to* ~~Belleville~~ Devil's Wood Yard (Loft Mountain) and I've never knowed such a thing as a mountain lion.

D.S.: This is priceless what you are telling me. Now I have one

very serious question to ask you. You were saying you did a lot of hunting and that you did it out of necessity.

R.M.: That is true.

D.S.: Okey. You didn't keep them all as pets?

R.M.: No.

D.S.: Then how would you hunt these.

R.M.: That depends on what I'm hunting for <sup>if you</sup> ... rabbit hunt ... let's get back to my first hunting. A kid wants to start hunting..I got three <sup>sons</sup> ~~kids~~ and I'm teaching them to track now. When I first started hunting I was eight years old and I started rabbit hunting late in the evening..sundown..when a rabbit was hopping around the edge of the field. So when he stopped you kill him if you can. I didn't have no luck the first time. First time I shot at a lot, but I didn't kill any. But then you go on from your rabbits to your quail, your grouse, lots of those in there. You hunt those just like you do in modern days, out in the country only it's harder out in the forest. You got to be a good shot and you don't go out there unless you know what you are doing. I reckon everybody knows that. Then you call them. I sit out there and call them on up to me and just kill them, even with a rifle. And then you hunt your small game and all just like that. <sup>squirrels</sup> Squirrels and all. Now your groundhog..you will see him run under a rock and maybe you sit there .. I love it ,. you sit there all day long waiting for that groundhog to come out. Well maybe he won't come out so you .. if he's not out that day you go back the next day..go on..you go back the next day. That's the way you kill a ground hog. Or you set a trap in a hole but that trap

has got to be completely hid or you can't see no ground <sup>change</sup> ~~chains~~.

The way that groundhog was ~~on~~ he will not step in it. We trapped them too. We trapped them and shot them. Now when you come to a fox or anything like that..that was only hunted for the fur.

D.S.: Alright, what would you do with the fur?

R.M.: Alright, we ship the fur to many companies..Taylor's, Funks, Spears, Sears Roebuck, and we'd carry some up to Elkton, but we didn't get as much up there. We would sell them at Mcquires. Like I say, if we needed something right bad and maybe didn't have but a few dollars and we had a few pelts, we would carry them to Mcquire's and sell them you know; but, if we didn't need no money or didn't need something we would ship them off to one of these companies <sup>by mail</sup> ~~that I named~~ and it would be gone about ten days and we would get a check back in the mail. And you would get more money that way.

D.S.: Did you ever sell rabbits?

R.M.: We sold many rabbits. We sold 300 a week. Averaged, I believe, 300 a week. Mr. Bewey Snow is dead but he has a son that runs Dyke Store. Owns. He don't run it. But he can remember. We usta carry 300 rabbits there a week and sell them for 10¢ a piece. Now we sold our rabbits..now we eat some, but we didn't eat very many wild rabbit, we sold our rabbit for 10¢ a piece, we sold our quail for 15¢ a piece, and we sold our grouse \$1 a piece. Bewey Snow <sup>6</sup> would bring that trailer up in Shifflet Hollow; if he didn't bring it up there, we would walk up here to Dyke's and sell him our rabbits, birds, pheasant

whatever we had you know. That was all he bought.

D.S.: What do you call a pheasant.

R.M.: Well there are two things. We grewed up with a grouse as as a pheasant. We didn't know what a pheasant was. Everybody seemed to call a grouse a pheasant. Lot of mountain people do yet. You don't call a grouse a grouse, you call it a pheasant. We grewed up thata way. But it's not. It's a grouse. A pheasant is a different species.

D.S.: Did you ever see any pheasants?

R.M.: No sir, I've never seen a ring neck .. we turned them loose in there..my brother, Lonnie did, but they left. Never saw a ring neck pheasant in the Shenandoah National Park.

D.S.: That's what I thought. That's what I thought.

R.M.: That's right.

D.S.: This is abosolutely beautiful .. you are telling me so much.  
How about herbs. Did your mother know herbs?

R.M.: Yea, my mother knowed herbs and I knew herbs and we made many many medicines out of them.

D.S.: Alright!

R.M.: Now I want to explain that..First I want to start with herbs for babies that's better than we can buy today. When a baby is born today a doctor gives vitamins..he don't know it..herbs much better than vitamins they give today. There is a shrub that grows mostly in the hollows. Growed in Butterwood Hollow, had plenty of it. Spicewood. Now you take that Spicewood..my mother always kept catnip..that's a common weed that grows out there..some people might not know it..she kept that always dry

just like you dry mustard, for our salad. She would send me a many a time to break..a baby come around..an armful of Spicewood. You break this spicewood up in little sticks and put it in something and boil it with this catnip and then we take the broth and strain it and put a little sugar in it and that was given for vitamins for a new baby even three hours old. One of the best things even right today. And we had another medicine and I think today is one of the..better than doctor's can give. This has many names, but I can give two to you. You take diarrhea. There is an herb grows in the forest called white planten. You take that and boil it just like you was gonna make a tea out of it and put a little sugar in it just like you would any other tea and give it to the baby and I've never knowed one that didn't clear up in less than three days.

D.S.: Is it good for adults too?

R.M.: I'd think it would be the same, but I never knowed adults to take it. I'd think it would be the same, but I do not know. For adults we didn't do a thing but take plain epsom salt and work it out of our stomach. Didn't doctor for that in no respect whatsoever. Many other things we used medicines for..we didn't buy medicines. One of the greatest ~~salve~~ could be made today that could heal up any sore on the outside that I really knowed, I believe could heal up any sore

D.S.: What?

R.M.: You take a May apple..little apple that grows outside..Let me sit here and think. Get allthese parts. I take a May apple

and a little bit of pine <sup>ROSIN</sup> resin, and a little bit of <sup>TALLOW</sup> tallow.  
mutton <sup>TALLOW</sup> tallow..any kind of <sup>TALLOW</sup> tallow..mutton <sup>TALLOW</sup> tallow is the best.

Some buds off a gillium tree..that's a tree looks like a oak.

Take the buds off that and take just a little bit of kerosene.

Mama said take twelve drops, but I put  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. full. Put all that in a pan together and boil it. Mix it all together and

then you take that out and rub it over any sore .. I don't care what kind of sore it is and it will heal it right up.

Anyone can try it that wants too. If you got an ~~abscess~~ <sup>abscess</sup> or a bruise use pine <sup>ROSIN</sup> resin right off the tree..or a cut..Kill the infection. One of the greatest things..I know of no medicine that mama would buy..now liniment..here's another one

I don't know of to many people that knows it..I got two brothers that knows it. You take a liniment you buy in the store today like you rub on your shoulder because its hurting. You take an indian turnip, I think everybody knows what an indian turnip is, and a ginger root and boil it and put a <sup>TALLOW</sup> ~~tallow~~ in it and then take it a salve like and put on you..put too much on it will blister you, but it will numb your shoulders or anything just like any medicine you would put on.

D.S.: Then you would say it is for like stiffness?

R.M.: That's right. Stiffness or pulled muscles, anything like that.

Just like ben gay or anything only better than that. It numbs it.

It numbs your shoulder..you put enough on there it'll blister you.

D.S.: Yea, boy. What would your mother give you for a cold?

R.M.: Well mama would give us two things I still recommend one highly right today. Mama put a little bit of heresene on a mouth of



honey, bee's honey. One of the good things with a little alum on it. That's the main thing. I've knowed mama to give me different things you know for a cold. Then I've knowed mama to take mustard seed, know she always saved these, and she would take mustard seed and cook them just like a mush and if I had a deep cold in my chest, she'd take and put them on a flannel, you know a piece of yarn cloth and lay it on your chest when you go to bed. And mama always said that opened your chest up. We didn't have no doctor, but she must have knowed what she was doing. I've done some of it since myself and it worked. So I think she knew what she was doing. A lot of them old things..

D.S.: Uhhum. Did you ever eat Slippery Elm Bark?

R.M.: I've eat a lot of Slippery Elm Bark. That's another thing I don't know of but one tree. That's just before you get to Buckwheat Patch on the left side before you come to the curve.. right down in that flat there..William's Hill..Now Slippery Elm Bark looks thin, but you take your knife and carve in it inside it it looks like *carve*, it peels easy, just comes right off, shells right off but you can't kill the tree. That bark comes back every year. So you just peel that bark back and eat that whole inside just like eating a watermelon out of the rind. Well I went to that Slippery Elm Tree and climb up in that thing and just eat and eat and eat. Well I tell you it's nourishing...I don't think it's the right vitamins you should have, but you could live off it. Not starve. You could live of it right out of the wood, I .. but in the summer-

time you have no problem..you have an abundance of food.

Everything from say May up until *time fall* starts.

D.S.: You mention honey. Did you ever have hives of bees.


R.M.: Ah, we had bees, we had bees all the time. We moved bees out of the park when we left. We always had our honey bees, that's true...from the time I can remember. We never got rid of our bees til about 25 years ago.

D.S.: Uhhum

R.M.: That's right always kept our honey bees.

D.S.: How many hives did you have.

R.M.: Always kept around ten or twelve. All the time sometimes more.

Most of the time ten or twelve. Always kill out two in the fall of the year..all the time. You always pick out the old never kill the young hives. You keep the young hives and kill the old hives. You take some and put on three little sticks and dig you a hole and put down in the ground and light the little sticks and take your hives and set it down on top of it and then all you bees..kills them..and they drop right down,. in there and you take the hives and take the pieces. Now we had  hives out of bowls, some out of hollow logs. That's the way we kept our bees. We kept our honey all the time.

D.S.: Did you do any peeling of bark?

R.M.: My father did, I didn't. My father did peeling of bark and uh and he peeled over a lot of mountains. He told me about peeling over lot of bark in Flat Top, <sup>WYATT</sup> ~~Wine~~'s Mountain, Devil's Wood Yard. He'd haul it to Elkton, usta be a tannery over there..coal..tannery..

but my father peeled it, but I never did peel it. Now he peeled some after I was up big enough to peel it.

D.S.: He used a spud?

R.M.: Yea used a spud, but I never did help him, but I remember one time that he peeled two days for a fellow named James Knight and that's been since I was big enough to a helped him..I don't remember now why I didn't, maybe I was doing something else, but I never did peel for him.

D.S.: Okey..he didn't peel the bark that was on your own *land*

R.M.: No.no. we never peeled no bark. I tell you from Simons Gap to Piney Mountain..thats the name of the back of Buckwheat Patch there was no timber for bark or anything that was all just pretty bluegrass sod. You just see a big locus<sup>y</sup> here and yonder. These little bluff's that I call Moore's Bluff just little patches just shade for cattle. And now and then maybe you see just a little patch of wood with a acre or so in it.

D.S.: Oh, I see.

R.M.: But the rest was just bluegrass sod. It was no timber to peel even down..to get wood... we haul wood sometimes a mile. We'd go all the way to the back end of Buckwheat Patch..I'd say close to a mile..we haul some what we called Bud Spring, but we was no

D.S.: Did you haul it with a horse?

R.M.:

Cut it with a cross cut saw and uh sometimes we'd haul it to the house and saw it up, but most of the time we cut it up right where we cut it. Put it on slide and haul it *to the house*.

D.S.: What did the slide look like?

R.M.: Well it got two runners. You make your runners like that *it turns up at the end* and then you bore holes in the ~~end~~ *there*. And you can make them with all different kinds. Poppa always made his with three ~~stake~~ *stakes* on each side. That way you could stack your wood in there you know and it wouldn't roll off you know. Then you put three crossbars across it just to haul wood. You could haul *anything* but poppa didn't do that. He always laid a little bed on there you know where he could haul his corn you know from the field... Fotter. He always kept a little bed on there..the slide you know and then we could haul our wood, our ~~fotter~~ *fodder*, com and all stuff right on there.

D.S.: What did you do for fun?

R.M.: Oh really just playing in the woods and the mountains. That was our greatest fun, my greatest achievement was just in the woods... on a day like today.

D.S.: Were there any vines to swing on?

R.M.: Yea, plenty of vines. A learning everything. I tell you you don't learn everything over night. I really think getting me in the woods more so than the rest was. Excepting Sam..Sam was as bad for the mountains as I was. I could live in them all the time, and I could yet, if I could get up there. Hum, I'd go with Sam and watch him you know...he was a great hunter and a great woodsman, no question. And I'd watch him, he was always looking up at the sky or if he was gonna sit down and ~~watch~~ *wait* for a groundhog..he'd always look up at the sky or he was always wetting his finger or...I was little you know and I didn't know everything that was going on but I'd always go with him. He'd

always sent me off from him you know. He wouldn't let me sit down with him because he was afraid I'd make a fuss and the groundhog would <sup>not</sup> come out of the hole you know. If he killed a groundhog, I'd always be the one to help him skin it you know..help him dress it..I was right with him even if I was little and uh so one day I asked him you know about looking at the sky and wetting his finger. And I learned only in my later days .. I started learning then .. I learned it later that for a groundhog to come out of a hole if you scare him in there or if he sees you and goes in there you got to sit down opposite the wind..you cannot sit down with the wind going toward <sup>the hole</sup> ~~ya~~, and he was always looking for those leaves to see which way they was going or wetting his finger to see which way the air was going. So I started learning things off like that you know! That was one of my biggest things. Then he started learning me how to set traps for foxes which you gotta be smart to trap a fox, I don't care who it is. And one thing and another you know ..then I got to going on like he was and then when we got to trapping on water, then when I got up to about twelve..eleven..I could beat Sam. Sam would laugh!.I could catch more mink or muskrat I could catch it before Sam could. But he could beat me on land, he could catch more wildcat, fox anything like that...he was great. That's the way I learned a lot you know. I'd sit down and watch Sam you know ... I never will forget one time, you know. I sneaked up on him..he went off and didn't take me with him hunting. And uh, I didn't have but one rifle then, if I remember..didn't have but one..little short barreled Winchester..

I believe it was. But I sneaked up behind him. He never did know I was along with him that time. Went out there to what they call Williams' Cliff was a groundhog living there. And I was a sitting out there maybe five yards from him I believe in some honeysuckle...in some grape <sup>vines</sup> ~~vines~~ and honeysuckle and I could see Sam setting there snapping his eyes you know. Looking at that groundhog hole you know and I got up from there and sneaked away you know and Sam didn't know..oh six months later maybe a year later. I laughed and told Sam about that you know. But you really learn by watching you know.

D.S.: Sure. Did you ever use the hides? Did you ever tan them by taking..

R.M.: We never tanned anything but a tame cat. Now we tanned groundhog hides to make shoe laces or sew shoes, with now. We'd take and make *lacing* ~~you know~~ out of groundhog hide and that's what you make that out of now. And then we'd tan a cat hide. The only reason we tanned a cat hide now is *for a* *hangs* you know

Well a cat's the only thing really makes a good *hangs*  
So we'd tan us a *cat* . Well take out there a groundhog..we tanned a lot of groundhog hides. For lacing you know. That's the biggest thing we tanned.

D.S.: You didn't spend all your time in the woods. Didn't you ever play marbles or...

R.M.: Oh we played a lot of marbles. That's why the closing up of

Hern's Store was over marbles. That was one of the greatest games around up there. That was one of the biggest games in the mountains..that and setback. Oh say like, on this Saturday night..say that uh maybe one family would walk maybe five miles to a neighbors house..they'd play setback til day next morning and they'd go back. Maybe that family come there next week, maybe that family go to another next time. But they

D.S.: So there was a lot of visiting...

R.M.: Yea..one would visit one like I say maybe my family would visit William Frazier this week..we'd have a setback game or maybe sometime a marble game but not very often we had a marble game thatta way..we went to one place for that..maybe next weekend maybe he would come up there or maybe the next neighbor up the hill or right down next to the head of Shifflet Hollow...now it's in the park...was a fellow by the name of Irvin Shifflet lived there..left there and went to Shenandoah Valley or maybe he would come you know and have a setback game at our place. Well then maybe next weekend or maybe couple weekends maybe not every weekend we'd do these things..maybe we come on over here on Wyatt's Mountain over *there* and have a setback game. But on Saturday and Sunday wehad two games for Saturday and Sunday in the summertime and nothing was ever did on those two days but that.

D.S.: What?

R.M.: Half a day we had to work now. We had something to do at home, but after that after 12:00 that was it. Now we played marbles at George Hern's Store after 12:00 on Saturday til dark. As

long as you could see.

D.S.: Uhhum.

R.M.: On Sunday we played what you call <sup>TAN</sup> ~~Town~~ Ball. You don't see nothing like that no more. On Sunday we played that right there on one of the best diamonds .. is growed up there now.. right there in front of that forest ranger's house when you come down Simon's Gap Road and start up the lane and that's the name of that going up there going up on Flat Top. That's the name of the lane..Uh..right there on the left hand side. We played there...now we started there on Easter Sunday and we had a ball game there every Sunday til Thanksgiving. Sometimes if some other people you know was playing would go off apple picking before that time we would stop it..I've knowed up to stop it around maybe the middle of September, last of September, most time we'd go on up til the weather got cold. That was every Sunday and that marble game down at George Herns store was every Sunday til they had that big fight and knock down drag out down there that time. And that broke it up. They had a cement ring made down in the road .. right where the old road it at <sup>NOW</sup> ~~yet~~ .. and the old posters there yet.. I saw two years ago when I was up there, and uh, they had a cement ring made right down in the center of the road, and that's where everybody met. Sometimes over a hundred people there..I've never knowed over five as partners ! Most times five on a side was partners, but you know everybody mostly got into it before the game was over. Say these five would play these five two out of three games now whatever you set the game. Now say you set five points for the game or six points or seven



points mostly was the right game .. I've seen sometimes you knock the king sometimes in the first shot is a point. And I've seen that king go out there sometimes three or four times in a row..just one right after the other one..some was good at it.

D.S.: How about music. You said that you picked the banjo.

R.M.: Yea, we did. Now that there would happen on some weekends you know maybe once a month. My grandfather on my mother's side .. it was one there every month. They'd have what you call a big squaredance. And uh, my Uncle Jack lives over here at Standardville..only rich uncle I got..and I believe he got it crooked..tell you the God's truth and I tell him so.. He's worth a half million dollars and I don't believe he worked for all that..<sup>money</sup>..and I laugh and tell him about it you know. He was a great fiddle player..and my Aunt Frankie..she's living in my mother's old home <sup>house</sup> ~~place~~ right now..she's 84 years old.. she was a great banjo player. And then you know there were some guitar players come in around..there were a lot of good banjo players..oh I could call off dozens of good banjo players you know .. well we had whiskey you know, but you don't see no fighting or nothing like that you know.

D.S.: No.

R.M.: They would have whiskey you know just having a good time..and they would dance and play music all night long. And then one would call the numbers..the best I ever heard was Mr. Thornton Morris..he's dead now; had two sons, one of them about my age. Harold and James; and he was the number caller. Him and Mr.

Charlie Hall, I think it was from up here at Boonesville.

(Interruption for phone call)

D.S.: When did you have these dances?

R.M.: It wouldn't be no particular night. Most times dances would be on the weekends. I've knowed them on Wednesday nights; we'd never set no night you know..like I say you know..if it'd be at my grandfather's you know maybe he'd set the night; or if it'd be one of these other neighbor's maybe they'd set the night. You know! We really had no night..most times it'd be on week-end.

D.S.: How about applebutter boiling. Did you make that?

R.M.: Oh we made applebutter. Yea .. well we still have our old applebutter kettle. Uh, we made applebutter every year.

D.S.: Would all the neighbors get together?

R.M.: All the neighbors got together. Sometimes you'd see thirty or fourty. When we made applebutter, you put the applebutter on well, a bunch of young girls or young boys somebody would keep adding water to it and maybe we'd put the applebutter on at four o'clock that morning and poppa always wanted to get his applebutter off before night you know..about night. Shoot..sometimes we'd have water in that pot and keep on and we'd get it off at 12:00 in the middle of the night. And we made pumpkin butter uh..just take pumpkin butter..made it just like we did apple. We made different butter. We made one pot of pear butter. Can't remember but one and uh mama always made some pear butter on the cook stove we made one ~~pot~~ big pot of pear butter..we make pumpkin butter and applebutter everyyear.

D.S.: Did you ever hear of wild grape butter?

R.M.: Yea, but you don't make wild grape butter..mama made that..there is two things .. you make your applebutter and you use wild grape juice..and uh that's what you call,..now there are three or four different kinds of grapes.. but we always used the little coon grape for that. Mama said it gave it a better flavor and I think it did. Uh, some used the little blue grape..but the little coon grape..I went and picked mama a many half bushel and then set down and helped her pick the grapes and then she boiled these grapes<sup>get</sup> everything but the seed. She took the seed out of there. Then she would ..now you can make grape butter..mama called it grape jam. But we would take those grapes then you know and we would take the same amount of apples and we would mush those apples up now and make applebutter and then we would add them together you know. We called it grape butter you know.

D.S.: Okey..now when you were doing this applebutter boiling..was this like a party..if there were thirty or forty people...

R.M.: Well yea same as a party. Yea always..really more than a party you know. Like I say..always a bunch of young people..

D.S.: Did everybody play music? While you were doing it?

R.M.: Yea, always be somebody mostly with music. Always be somebody you knowed with whiskey. I ain't seen many people getting out of the way. Always some of them had just enough to drink you know, just be lifeable and fun you know. More of a party, really you know. Well you know three people could go out and make a kettle of applebutter. But making applebutter like we did you know..like I say be anywhere from ten to fifteen, maybe thirty

to fourty people..be same as having a party.

D.S.: Sure. Did you have the custom that if the paddle touched the side of the kettle, the gal got a kiss?

R.M.: Yea, that's right. That's come down thru the ages. Once around the side and twice thru the middle. And if you touched the kettle, well you got a kiss right there you know. I've touched it a many a times. That's right you know, and then there was a whole custom and I reckon it's true even today..that's come up thru the ages. I know it was done fifty years ago..I did it close to fifty years ago. We..always, throw in ten..I've seen close to twenty <sup>copper</sup> pennies always goes in a kettle of applebutter you know.

D.S.: Sure, you gotta keep it from sticking..

R.M.: That's right..now that's what they did to keep it from sticking. And uh, that's come up thru the ages. And a lot of things they do today..out, right here in the flat land,they got it from the mountain people. The mountain people really taught them.

D.S.: They did. That's right. It wasn't all work..but you'd get up early in the morning or roughly what time would you get up?

R.M.: Well now, poppa always got up ever morning *early* in the wintertime. Poppa got up mostly early in the summer too. But poppa got up early in the wintertime; ah, before daylight all the time. And he always kept..he kept whiskey all the time and poppa always the first thing he did when he got out of the bed.. he kept whiskey in the corn crib..I never knowed poppa to keep much more than a drink in the house..he'd get out of the bare-footed..I don't care how cold it was..and go to that corn crib

and get him a drink of whiskey and then come back and the fire you know sometimes would be died down..sometimes put wood on the fire before he'd go..sometimes he wouldn't..he'd get that whiskey you know and come back and he'd build the fire up. We had a big fireplace and uh, then he'd stay up the rest of the <sup>day</sup> ~~night~~ and then mama would get up around daylight..in the wintertime we didn't eat but twice a day. We'd eat about nine o'clock in the wintertime..but then we didn't get up..the little ones. <sup>didn't</sup> poppa maybe he'd get coffee or something you know maybe eat a mouthful of something. Mama'd always fix breakfast around nine o'clock. Then about four o'clock we'd eat..that was in the wintertime. In the summertime..we ate three times a day. If we was a working or if we wasn't .. ever day .. same way. If anybody come..they eat just like we did.

D.S.: Sure. Right. Did you have a big table where you could..

R.M.: Well our big, yea, our big table let me see, well more than that could have got at it..but uh, everybody never ate at one time. Well now, mama had a..which I still got a little bit of it in me, I reckon..mama had a custom..all grown people ate first, mostly. You know. Now six kids could sit on the back of our table. Had a long bench and the table set next to the wall and the bench went up the wall..now six kids could sit on that and eat well then three grown people could sit on the side and eat with one at each end. So five grown people and six kids could have plenty of room to eat at the table. Well in my coming up mama always, grown up there you know, and uh, enough to fill the table everybody..all the grown ups ate and then the kids..mama and the kids ate. But if it was just mama and poppa there and us kids, then all of us got at that table..

some of us, maybe stand up sometimes, but allof us would eat together. But, like if anyone else there, we didn't.

D.S.: Were you ever spanked?

R.M.: Oh, many times, I was spanked. The hardest beating I ever got in my life..I can feel that yet. Mama like to beat me to death one time.

D.S.: What did you do?

R.M.: I tell you just what I did. I didn't get half what I needed. It was along in the spring of the year..getting on up in, oh, round the last of May I reckon it was. Mama had set a chicken hen..mama raised her own chickens too you know..and she had hatched out nine little chickens and they had got up about as big as a quail and we had a sink hole out behind the house and and a briar patch..a water hole..and I should have knowed better than that..I was up about eight years old..and I got that bunch of little hens..little chickens..in that briar patch and I was sailing rocks in there..I done killed four of them little chickens in that briar patch and mama caught me and I tell you the truth she taken my pants down and she beat me..I was stripped from my ankles up to my belt..I tell you. Mama beat me..that was the hardest spanking I ever got..I never forget that thing. Then mama..mama and poppa was different..in whipping us.

D.S.: But you deserved it.

R.M.: I deserved it. I deserved more than I got.

D.S.: Did you ever speak back to them?

R.M.: No sir. Never did..Mama went in her grave..if I'd spoke a word back to mama..Mama was 75 years old when she died..well mama would have smacked me as quick if I'd have spoke a word back to

her, as she would if I'd been 10, years old. I ain't never spoke a word back to mama and poppa in my life.

D.S.: I wonder how they ever instilled that in you?

R.M.: I don't know..I tell you the biggest majority of the mountain people came up to not speak back to their parents. We would leave home rather than to talk back. I have knowed a lot of boys to leave at a young age..from fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen..some of them would do that..but to come right out, you know, and uh speak back to them..~~er~~ the mountain people the biggest majority of them was hotheads..what I call hotheads.. high temper or whatever you want to call it. And maybe say that maybe the father would uh do something a little bit wrong, say he was maybe fifteen years old .. he'd think he was a man .. maybe fifteen or sixteen .. rather than let the father take a switch or the mother take a switch to him well maybe they would run off..maybe go to a uncle. But just to right out and talk back to their parents..oh, that's something I ain't hear'd you know. Not that much of..I know our family didn't. That's for sure.

D.S.: No. I've not heard of anybody who said they did.

R.M.: No, that's one thing we could not do. Now we have to call everybody Aunt and Uncle. That's one more thing too, if we didn't want a whipping..they did not have to be no relation to us now..if they was old..just like a lot of people I still call..if they was old you was not allowed to call them by their name..You had to call them Aunt or you had to call them Uncle. Everybody was raised up that way. They didn't call nobody by name. I never called nobody in my life..I know an old person, uh, I know we was setting

here about six months ago..my son-in-law wanted to go visit one of my Uncles..the last one that died on my father's side.. and he was an injun, there was no question, a whole lot injun, mostly injun and we was all setting there talking and my daughter and my son-in-law, and my son-in-law popped up and asked him you know. Well, he spoke back right quick and said yes, I'm an injun and proud I am an injun too.

D.S.: Sure.

R.M.: Yea, he spoke right back and told him right quick...I told my son-in-law when we got back..I said well Darrell, I don't know why you wanted to ask him if he was an injun or not. Yea you can tell..they just grew up hotheaded.. alot you know.

D.S.: Yea..well they were sort of hotheaded..the mountain people.

R.M.: Quite a bit.

D.S.: Did you ever hear of any fueds going on in your area?

R.M.: Oh, there was lots of fueds going on..uh, a lot of that led from women, and from whiskey now. Like I say..one person would make a little whiskey and then another person would make a little whiskey. One would think the other was doing a little more business than the other was. I think that led to a lots of it. Then some fueds seemed just to get up. Then some fueds just like I say..If I was to have a fued with that man down there and somebody you know would do something to agitate that man to keep the fued going maybe or something like that.

D.S.; Yea..

R.M.: That thing really didn't happen in the mountains that much you



know. But a lot of the fueding that went on in the mountain..

was really I wouldn't consider a fued. Oh maybe *fall out and have*  
a big fight today..maybe somebody get knocked in the head or  
cut up a little bit; and uh, never hear of no warrants being  
got. Well maybe..

D.S.: Did you ever do any rocking?

R.M.: Throwing rocks at each other. Oh goodness child..been ~~in many~~ *many*  
a rock battle. Been knocked in the head a dozen times. And  
I've hit a whole lot too. We usta have a lot of big rock  
battles; and just like a say tho, when these rock battles was  
over, they was..I been in a whole lot by myself and I been in  
them with a bunch on both sides..when these rock battles was  
over, whichever side got the worse of it was taken that was  
all was to it. That was all there was to it. We never went  
and got no warrants and uh, maybe the next week or ten days, well  
you see all us out here playing ball, playing marbles..you know  
we didn't hold a grudge..so uh, we didn't hold grudges against  
one another in no respect..uh and I think that was the good part  
about it..uh I been shot at..I been shot three times. I was shot  
down..come mighty near pulling my hole card one time..and uh,  
right today sha I don't hold no grudge against nobody..

D.S.: No.

R.M.: It was just a free for all when you get a bunch like that you  
know..

D.S.: Sure, right. In other words there were quite a ~~lot~~ *number* of people in  
that area.

R.M.: That's right.

D.S.: Yea. Roughly how many people (families) would you say were

there?

R.M.: Now in how big an area, you want to go over?

D.S.: Well, let's say within a ten mile radius of your home.

R.M.: Oh, in my radius of my home, I could come up with quite a few.

In a ten mile radius of my home I'd be way out of the park;  
Hell..shoot..heck there'd be over a thousand families in that  
distance. I'd say in the radius of my home in the Buckwheat  
Patch..now I'm going towards Shenandoah..going toward Elkton,  
I'm going that a way to Melvin Hansberry's..which I'm going  
I'd say two and a half miles so I'm gonna count five families,  
six families, seven families that a way. Then I'm a going south  
then back toward Charlottesville and I'm gonna count one, two,  
three, four, five families that a way .. be ten .. these is  
two and a half miles now of where I lived at ...two and a half  
three miles .. now I'm gonna come straight east .. that way  
I'm coming over toward Flat Top .. I'd say two and a half miles  
that way I'd run into how many families that way now..I'd say  
one, two, three families. Three families that way, so I'd say  
in a square there of three miles in every direction you'd take  
about twelve families.

D.S.: Oh <sup>boy</sup> my Lord.

R.M.: That'd be about the tops.

D.S.: Yea. Okey. Uh, then the school had a lot of children?

R.M.: Yea the school had a lot of children; but, no great amount a  
children. Now some of those children come out of the park. Now  
that was down towards your uh, <sup>Beldor</sup> Belleville. When you got down  
there towards Melvin Hansberry's, and there's some Davis families

down there and some Herns families down there. They came up there too, but he was not in the park. And then you came back down toward Charlottesville you got Mannie Sullivan's and uh some Shifflet's and uh down in there you see. We walked down in there too about two miles which is not in the park. Then you come East like you coming to Bacon Hollow you would have run into Dave Sullivan and Authur Sullivan's families you know coming around what we call <sup>WYATT</sup> ~~Wane~~ Mountain..they wasn't in the park. But they would come to that school. So I would say that on an average for me to just count back you know more than fourty years..I'd say an average of the scholars in that school would be somewhere between twenty five and thirty five. Be right in that group.

D.S.: Hey, how about ghost stories. Did you ever hear..

R.M.: I'd hear a lot of them..I've never believed in a ghost.Uh, I always said it was your imagination..I never believed in being afraid and I don't believe in a ghost. I've seen two things I can't answer for. But I don't believe it was a ghost. I saw a dog one time at I can't give an answer for that dog and uh, it was a dog definitely, but I can't give an answer for it; but I don't believe in ghosts. And I tell you why I can't give an answer for the dog. I had gone to see a girl one time on a Saturday night and on the way back home the moon was shining so bright *like you have a rifle gun* I could see ~~the shadow of life~~ *for just* . And I was coming up a path up an old wagon road through a woods..we called it a Beaten Road..it was just an old wagon road..I could see plain and uh, I saw this dog, I

wasn't over twenty yards from it .. looked to be a dog ..  
and dog was just sitting there looking right straight at  
me as it could look. I reached down and picked up a stick  
first and throwed it and that dog didn't move. And ~~that~~...  
I had an old thirty eight pistol in my pocket, and I think  
to myself I'll make you move. I stood right there and shot  
right into that dog and I know I could see fire hit the  
rocks on ~~the other~~ <sup>either</sup> side where the bullets hit the rocks. And  
them bullets was hitting whatever it was. I shot off one  
*cartridge out of the gun*

And there was a big apple tree there, I walked out around  
that apple tree and through and up through a pine field and I  
went on home. Next day I told my mama about it and my mama  
said 'son, you sure'. I said mama I know it was something, I  
don't know what it was. I went back out there and looked and  
I seen where them bullets hit the rock and hit the ground. I  
never could get an answer for that but I don't believe in any  
such thing as a spook.

D.S.: No. Did you ever play practical jokes?

R.M.: Yea, I played a lot of them, crazy jokes, on people. Oh goodness  
gracious. Uh, oh, I'd take my brothers' you know and put oatmeal  
in the bed and salt, and you can't sleep in a bed if you tie the  
feet together. You know sometime in the wintertime we did when  
we growed up you know..right little you know..two or three of us  
would sleep together you know. I'd tie the feet together. I  
pulled some awful jokes in my day. I tell you right now. I was  
all the time a pulling something on somebody. And when I was  
growed up then, I had an uncle by the name of Uncle 'Whit *said*

*was killed by a car*  
*up here on* and when I grewed up he called me  
*and he wasn't dead* and he said I don't know what you did, but you  
still here, he pulled jokes on people same way; but, I usta  
pulla some terrible jokes on people.

D.S.: We are practically out of tape so I'm afraid our interview is  
at an end. You don't know how I thank you

R.M.: Well you quite welcome..

D.S.: And I thank you for the park, I thank you for....